1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

gambling games were very popular. Other sports included wrestling, boat racing, tug of war, hide and seek, and skill or strength contests. 174

Marriages, including those with captive women, were regulated by rules of moiety exogamy and incest avoidance, but unions between certain cross-cousins were favored as were marriages between two sisters and two brothers. Residence in marriage was generally matrilocal and unions were not final until a period of bride service had elapsed. Polygyny was practiced by men whose hunting ability enabled them to secure sufficient food and skins to support two wives and many children. Plural wives were always sisters. Fraternal polyandry was resorted to under such special circumstances as that of an old man who was too weak to supply all the resources required by his family.

The conception of the supernatural revolved around the recognition of a number of beings, some of which were believed hostile while others were regarded as friendly. Special respect was also extended to certain animals, including the otter, mink, and weasel. These animals were never killed. A belief in a supreme deity was keenly developed, but individuals relied primarily on their own supernaturally derived power for security and help. Such power enabled men to hunt successfully and also functioned in curing. A wide variety of ritual observances were associated with hunting activities not the least of which was avoidance of the danger which a woman and her biological functions held for a man's power. Sexual abstinence preceded and followed hunting, while during menstruation and parturition women were isolated. At menarche a girl used a quill tube for drinking water and scratched herself with a stick rather than with her fingers. Every person was a potential shaman who could cure illness through his supernatural power. Certain curers, however, attained greater prestige than others and men of this rank sometimes became rivals who competed in public conjuring. Shamans effected cures by sucking disease from the body, imparting their power to water which the patient drank, singing, and receiving confessions from the sick. Plant medicines were limited and were administered by anyone. Shamans could also sorcerize, but this behavior does not appear to have been widespread.

Death was attributed to both sorcery and natural causes. Old and infirm people might be abandoned and left to die. The corpse was buried in summer but cremated in cold weather. Following a husband's death, his widow underwent a period of restriction in which her activities were controlled by her brother-in-law whom she might later marry. After death the spirit of the deceased was believed to continue its existence in an afterworld.

Historic contacts. Kaska contacts with the Tlingit probably antedate the arrival of the white man in the western part of the area. In the late eighteenth century, after the Europeans had visited the Tlingit villages along the Alaska panhandle, these connections became intensified since the coastal Indians, including both Tlingit and Tahltan, became middlemen in the fur trade between the Europeans and the more interior groups. Two Tlingit tribes, the Taku and Stikine Indians, from their geographical position and reported evidence, may be assumed to have maintained such relations with the Kaska (Fig. 1). Farthest north were the Taku people, occupying the area around Taku Bay and lower Taku River.[39] Krause asserts that they went up the Taku River and across the high passes 175 177

[39] There is some question if this refers to a branch of the Tlingit or to a Tahltan tribe which, according to Field and Jenness, later became influenced by Tlingit people. Today, in Lower Post, the Tsaltu Lake Taku are reported to be Tlingit. See Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* (1932), 396; Field, Unpublished Manuscript (1913).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

of the Cordillera toward the headwaters of the Yukon River, where they traded with local Indians.[39] The headwaters of the Taku are about thirty miles east of Teslin Lake, at present a Taku Indian village, which adjoins the territory of the Upper Liard Indians. According to Lotz numerous trails lead into the Teslin Lake area from the Pacific Coast and a 150 mile trail runs from Teslin Indian village to the Upper Liard area.[40] To the south the Stikine, or Stakhin, people utilized the Stikine River to carry on "a lively trade with the Indians of the interior."[41] The latter designation certainly includes the Tahltan but may also refer to the Kaska. From the upper Stikine River trade goods were further distributed by the Tahltan, who reached the Kaska on Dease Lake and, via overland trade from Telegraph Creek, the Upper Liard Indians at Albert (now Cormier) Creek, twenty-three miles west of Lower Post (Fig. 1). The mouth of Albert Creek is now the site of the bridge by which the Alaska Highway crosses the upper Liard River. According to River Joe, Tahltan traders also reached a point about fifteen miles further up the Liard. Here they established themselves in "tents." The chief's dwelling is said to have flown a flag and to have been surrounded by the tents of the "boys" who accompanied him. From this statement it would appear that Tahltan trade with the western Kaska continued until relatively late in the period of historic contact. The standard of value in this trade may be gauged from the report that an empty lard can sold for one beaver skin.[42] Krause says that some Tlingit Indians traveled as far east as Fort Simpson, which they reached in six days.[43]

Relations between the Tlingit and the inland tribes, whom the former called Gu'una, were not always cordial. Swanton reports that the Tlingit valued the Athapaskans "for what could be gotten out of them but otherwise looked down upon as a lower race."[44]

The first Europeans. Several dates can be advanced for the first meetings between the Kaska and Europeans. The earliest probably occurred shortly after 1800, following the establishment of Forts Simpson and Liard. Soon after the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay and the North-West Companies in 1821, a trading settlement was built at the confluences of the Smith and Liard Rivers known as Fort Halkett.[45] In 1834, J. McLeod, a trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, left Fort Simpson "and ascended the Liard to explore its upper waters—hoping, if possible, to cross the watershed and find some stream running to the Pacific." He traveled to where Lower Post is today and then ascended the Dease River, eventually reaching the Stikine after passing through Dease Lake "which he named after the Arctic explorer."[46] Four years later (1838) McLeod established a trading post on Dease Lake.

Billy Barrs reported a story which may refer to the post that McLeod established on Dease Lake. The Indians discovered peculiar chips of wood floating down the water, and

[39] Krause, *Die Tlinkit-Indianer* (1885), 109. See also Swanton, *Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationships of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 396, 414; Olson, *Some Trading Customs of the Chilkat Tlingit* (1936).

[40] Lotz, *Geology of the Teslin-Dease Lake Area, Yukon* (1956), 1-2.

[41] Krause, *Die Tlinkit-Indianer* (1885), 111.

[42] Barbeau states that the Tahltan also reached Frances Lake where they traded with the Hudson's Bay Company. Barbeau, *Mountain Climb* (1944), 13, 18-19.

[43] Krause, *Die Tlinkit-Indianer* (1885), 111.

[44] Swanton, *Social Conditions, Beliefs, and Linguistic Relationships of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 411, 414.

[45] Voorhis, *Historic Forts and Trading Posts* (1930), 70.

[46] Files, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 73.

1: Honigmann K-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

realized that these could not have been made by beaver. To resolve their curiosity, they 175
traveled up the river and found a house. A white man showed them how these chips of 177
wood had been made with an ax but extensive conversation between the two groups was impossible. The following year the trader returned with an interpreter from the east and now people began to bring their furs to the house in exchange for tea, tobacco, and other European goods. According to Old Man, the Tahltan Indian once tried to kill the trader at [173]
Dease Lake. A shaman, however, seized the killer's wrist and wrenched away his knife. Although the "doctor" cut his own hand, he saved the storeman's life.

Old Kean reported having heard that the Kaska people first encountered the white man at Dease Lake. The trader subsisted entirely on dry meat which the Indians prepared for him. A white woman is said to have lived with this man. Informants several times mentioned that in those days the traders asked Indians to pile up their pelts alongside a rifle. When the skins reached the top of the gun, the trader accepted the pile in exchange for the weapon. According to Old Man, the Indians were extremely shy of the early white men [173]
and talked to them only with their heads down or otherwise averted.

In 1840, two years after the establishment of Dease Lake Post, Robert Campbell, an explorer for the Hudson's Bay Company, started out from Fort Halkett and reached the site of Fort Frances at the foot of Frances Lake. Here he built a dwelling which he called Glenlyon House after his Scotland home. In 1843 he constructed a trading post which was first named Frances Lake House in honor of the explorer's wife. The name was later changed to Fort Frances.[18] The sight of white men with whiskers at Fort Frances is said to have greatly frightened local Indians who thought that the strangers were wild animals. At the sound of a rifle the people fled in terror. Also the Indians would at first not eat bread. The trader, through his interpreter, explained the use of the tobacco pipe to the Indians, stating that smoke was drawn into the mouth the same way as milk from the mother's nipple. Thus the Indians learned to smoke, although at first they were repulsed by the strong smell of tobacco.

There now follows a period when many of these early trading posts were temporarily or permanently abandoned. Dease Lake was deserted in May 1839.[19] It did not resume operation until many years later and was again closed in the summer of 1945. Fort Frances was abandoned in 1851, following the looting of the post by the Chilkat (Tlingit) Indians. It reopened in 1880 but was again abandoned. A new post was finally built at the foot of Frances Lake by Jack Hilditch about 1936. It was soon acquired by the Hudson's Bay Company under whose management it continues. Fort Halkett was closed in 1865.[20] Its timbers and stone fireplace may still be seen a short distance off the Alaska Highway. The trade was absorbed by Forts Nelson, Liard, and Toad River Post near the mouth of Toad River on the north bank of the Liard. This latter post is not mentioned by Grouard,[21] who states that after the closing of Fort Halkett those Indians who had been provisioned there

[18] Campbell, *Discovery and Exploration of the Pelly (Yukon) River* (1883); Vecchio, *Historic Forts and Trading Posts* (1930), 69; Burpee, *Campbell of the Yukon* (1945).

[19] Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 76.

[20] McConnell, *Report on an Exploration in the Yukon and Mackenzie Basins* (1890), 43D. However, Vecchio gives the year as 1855. Vecchio, *Historic Forts and Trading Posts*, (1930), 70.

[21] Grouard, *Souvenirs de mes soixante ans d'apostolat dans l'Athabaskie-Mackenzie* (n.d.), 100.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

175 177 found themselves "thrown into complete poverty" and in the spring of 1867 brought their furs to Fort Liard. Two groups were reported to have come there at the time, Mountain People and Bad People, but neither group brought their families. Toad River post was abandoned about 1890.

Meanwhile, in 1872, Sylvester built a store at the junction of McDame Creek and Dease River. In 1876, after selling this establishment to the Hudson's Bay Company, he contemplated building a "lower post" on the south bank of the Liard near the confluence of the Dease (Pl. 1, D).[83] The Indians living on the north bank, however, complained that when the ice was running they could not cross the river. Since the south bank tribes were already trading at McDame Creek, Sylvester was particularly anxious to reach the more northern bands. Following their suggestion he built on a flat almost a mile below the present site of Lower Post, i.e., below the confluence of the Dease. This is the present site of the abandoned RCMP barracks which were built in 1926. Before 1887 the site had been abandoned for a new store erected where Lower Post stands today. In a short time Sylvester's business was acquired by the Hudson's Bay Company. After 1896 the company built a larger store and warehouse but maintained Sylvester's building as an auxiliary warehouse until 1945, when the structure was demolished.

Important developments took place in the western area between the abandonment of Fort Halkett and the construction of Sylvester's Lower Post. While gold had been found along the Stikine River as early as 1861, it was in 1872 that the bars of the Liard yielded traces of this metal around the ruins of Fort Halkett. In 1873 profitable strikes began to be made at Thibert's Creek at the foot of Dease Lake. Gold hunters in large numbers now began to pour into the country via the Stikine River and in June 1874 the population, exclusive of Indians, was estimated to have reached close to 1500 persons.[84] Many of the miners quit the country with the approach of winter. At this time a Negro, Harry McDame, discovered gold on McDame Creek, where Sylvester operated a trading post. The name of the post was eventually altered from Sylvester's Landing to McDame Creek Post. The news of the gold strikes continued to travel and the influx of miners developed a busy traffic on the Stikine River. In 1874 the Province of British Columbia improved the portage from Telegraph Creek on the Stikine across the Height of Land to the head of Dease Lake, opening a sixty-two mile pack horse trail. By 1876 the population of the Cassiar district reached about 2000 and included a large number of Chinese laborers. The production of the region quickly declined until, in 1887, Dawson found only four or five whites and forty Chinese still at work.[85] In this period three hundred head of cattle were brought overland from the upper Fraser River.

Sometime in the late 80's a Frenchman, Jean La Montagne, opened a trading post at the mouth of the Muddy (Kechika) River. This establishment was soon moved fifty miles up the Muddy River and named Chee House. The post was abandoned early in the twentieth century, when La Montagne, the reputed father of the late Mrs. River Joe, moved to

[83] Voorhis describes Lower Post as being "at the confluence of Dease and Frances Rivers forming the Liard" and describes the post as an outpost of Fort Frances. Voorhis, *Historic Forts and Trading Posts* (1930), 106.

[84] Dawson, *Extracts from the Report on an Exploration made in 1887 in the Yukon District, N. W. T.* (1898), 308–309. See also Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 56–57.

[85] Dawson, *Report of an Exploration in the Yukon District* (1887–1888), 81.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

Nome, Alaska. Goods to these Mudday River posts were first floated down the Liard by scow, a trip entailing passage through Forty-Mile Canyon. Later freight for Glen House was packed cross-country by horse from McDame Creek. A Fraser River Indian, Packer Tom, was in charge of this operation. 175 177

In 1887, Dawson visited Lower Post, which he described as "situated at the edge of a terrace forty feet in height on the left bank of the Liard, about half a mile above the mouth of the Dease. It is of a very unpretentious character, consisting of a few log buildings. In the vicinity the woods have been entirely destroyed by fire."[38]

Pike was the second traveler to traverse a large part of the Cassiar and to publish an account of his journey. In 1891, "On 19th August, early in the morning, we reached Sylvester's Landing at the mouth of McDame's Creek, the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company's district of Cassiar. A casual glance at once shows the contrast in the appearance of this western trading post as compared with any of the company's establishments in the same latitude on the eastern side of the Rockies. The slovenly log buildings, the row of Indian shanties in close proximity to the master's house, and the absence of any attempt at regularity in the positions of the various storehouses, compare unfavourably with the neatly kept forts on the northern lakes, where the Hudson's Bay Company has held undisputed sway for a century."[39] Lower Post he describes as another "unpretentious establishment" consisting of "A small store, a log hut for the man in charge, and a few rough buildings belonging to the Indians." A man named Smith is reported to have been the manager.[40]

During his visit to Lower Post, Pike heard a rumor that some of the tribes northwest of the divide "intended to bring their canoes across the portage and make a raid on all the whitemen and Indians whom they met on the Liard and Dease, and had even hopes of plundering the Hudson's Bay Post at Sylvester's Landing."[41] Another version of this story was heard in 1944 from Fred Allen, a white trapper, who received it from a Nass River native, Herbert Hankin. In the 90's an Indian woman informed P. Agnell, the Hudson's Bay representative in Lower Post, and his assistant, Hankin, that Pelly River Indians were coming to attack the settlement. The Indians came but approached the post only to sell some skins. After the exchange had been completed they made their camp a short distance upstream. That night Agnell awoke to hear a dog growl. He looked out and saw Indians crawling toward the store. Seizing his gun the trader flung open the door and shot into the ground. The Indians explained that they had come to sell the Company some additional pelts.

Pike gives an interesting picture of native health in the Cassiar at the time of his visit. "Once we visited a large lake 20 miles to the westward of [Lower] post,[42] and laid in a

[38] This statement seems to indicate that Dawson found Lower Post situated where it is today. In 1944 the burned area to which he refers was covered with second growth poplar and willow. Dawson, *Extracts From the Report of an Exploration made in 1887 in the Yukon District, N. W. T.* (1898), 324.

[39] Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 60-61

[40] Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 68.

[41] Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 130.

[42] This is clearly a reference to Watson Lake, one of the most important fish lakes in the vicinity and not of the size of a modern airport.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

175 177 supply of whitefish, which we caught in nets under the ice, in great quantities. Here we found a band of Liard Indians hunting and fishing. Sickness was prevalent in the camp—very few of the men were well enough to hunt moose, and they had come to the lake to be sure of making a living. A melancholy spectacle the camp presented; half a dozen pits in the snow lined with pine brush, a little more pine brush stuck up as a wind-break, and no other shelter from the weather. Lying in their blankets were the sick men, some of them evidently never to get up again—dying among the moose hair and fish guts . . . 'Oh! We're always like this,' the chief explained, 'since the white men came to the country. In the old time, my tribe was powerful, but now many of my people die every winter. Some children are born, but they are no good—they die soon.' "[40]

In another place the author comments further on the depopulation of the Kaska area. "The remnants of the once numerous tribe of Casca Indians presents a good example of the rapid deterioration of natives, caused by free intercourse with whites—especially, perhaps, with a class of whites which is always to be found in mining camps . . . . No pious missionary has ever penetrated into Cassiar to point out these matters to the Indians . . . . Perhaps it is too late to begin, as at the present rate of mortality, the Cascas will be extinct in ten years time, and the banks of the Dease and Liard depopulated."[41]

In 1897 and 1898 a second influx of miners entered the area, this time en route to the Klondike gold fields. Two principal routes to the central Yukon passed through the Cassiar region. One involved travel up the Stikine River to Telegraph Creek. From this point the miners could use the Dease, Liard, and Frances Rivers to reach the northern divide across which they would find the headwaters of the Yukon's tributaries. Another route was overland from the Stikine to Teslin Lake and thence by river to Dawson. The overland trail from Glenora and Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake presumably corresponds to the route followed by the early Tahltan traders visiting the Upper Liard Indians. There was still a third but less used means of access to the Yukon. This was from Edmonton, Alberta, to the Finlay River (via the Peace) and then up Finlay and Fox Rivers to Sifton Pass and down the Muddy to the vicinity of Deadwood Lake. From here the trail leading to Chee House ran to McDame Creek where river travel could be resumed. Johnston reports the latter route to have been traversed in 1898 by Inspector J. D. Moodie of the Northwest Mounted Police.[42] According to Old Man, a pack horse trail was cut at this time stretching from Lower Post to Frances Lake along the banks of the Liard and Frances Rivers. The trail is now said to be largely overgrown but the trees still show where the bark was rubbed by the bulky packs.[43]

The Klondike bound miners passing through the country at this time are still recalled as a group by the local Indians. A number of Upper Liard Indians, some serving as guides to the gold seekers, are reported to have followed the migration to Frances Lake and across

[40] Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 98–99.

[41] Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 61–62.

[42] Johnston, *Gold Placers of Dease Lake Area, Cassiar District, B. C.* (1926), 40A.

[43] For some details of the miners' hardships as they passed through the Cassiar see Tillemache, *Reminiscences of the Yukon* (1912), 23–32. Also, Dennis, *Life on a Yukon Trail* (1899), 377–390, 457–466.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

the divide. Some of these Indians settled around Frances Lake and Pelly River and remain there today.

Ideas of Christianity had undoubtedly long percolated through the Kaska area from the eastern peoples who were near the Oblate settlements on the Mackenzie and Fort Nelson Rivers. An Oblate made a brief visit to Fort Halkett in the middle of the nineteenth century, but no direct contact with religious leaders began until relatively late.

Around 1900 a Protestant missionary, Pallgrave, began to visit the Kaska. His preaching, which was conducted out of doors, was strongly directed against witch torture, but he also taught a few men the rudiments of writing. Selecting influential men he encouraged these to exert a moral influence on the other people. After freezing his foot by stepping into an overflow (water seeping through river ice), Pallgrave was replaced by English. The latter minister is reported to have remarked that he found the Kaska "too wild." He was followed by Thorman whose son, Fred, is the current Protestant minister at Telegraph Creek. About 1925 a Catholic church and mission school were established at Telegraph Creek. Sometime toward the close of the nineteenth century the Prophet Cult made its appearance in the Kaska area. The movement appears to have been inspired by Catholic ceremonialism and its weak development in the Cassiar was probably at least in part a result of the limited influence of Catholicism on the Kaska tribes.[46]

Among the Pelly River Indians, where the Upper Liard Indians encountered this movement, the leader of the cult was Gulai'š ("Helps the People"). This man was a Ross River shaman who affected ragged clothes, refused to cut his hair, and carried a drum. He is said to have been provided with a piece of skin on which was drawn a picture of people following in a line to heaven.[47] At assemblages, the prophet talked of God and sometimes threw pieces of meat and fat into the fire, also feeding small pieces to people. He told the people not to eat moose feet or they would be unable to use their own feet.[48] He also stuck a small piece of a feather into the hair of every person present. To some Indians he distributed amulets, consisting of smooth flat stones, the size of a quarter. These, he directed, were to be sewn into a piece of skin and worn next to the heart suspended from around the neck.[49] On other occasions he sang from a skin which was shaped like a book and accompanied himself on a drum. It was said that if blood dropped from the "book" good luck could be expected in hunting. The prophet often demonstrated his power by predicting the arrival of strangers. Gulai'š did not care for the Protestant missionaries, claiming that they did not speak the truth. He was, however, favorably disposed to the Catholic Church.

A Kaska Indian, George Steele, who had spent many years in Fort Nelson before re-

[46] Spier, however, points out that the Prophet Cult of the Northern Athapaskans may have been influenced by the Prophet Dance of the northern plateau. See Spier, *The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and Its Derivatives* (1935).

[47] "Maps" of this kind were a common feature of the Northern Athapaskan Prophet Cult. See Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 132–134.

[48] Both the taboo on moose feet and feeding the fire are aboriginal religious elements which, in some form, still survive among the Kaska today. The feeding of meat and the distribution of feathers mentioned below hearken of communion.

[49] This practice seems to have been influenced by the Catholic scapula.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

175 177 194 turning to Lower Post, is said to have had possession of a map showing trails to heaven. The map, Indians reported, found its way into the hands of Catholic missionaries and was blessed by the bishop. In the Dease River area, a ceremony occurred that may have contained overtones of the Prophet Dance as described by Spier. A shaman would play his drum and sing while the people danced. This was referred to as "praying to God." The shaman also dreamed to foretell the future. As a result of participating in the dance, men secured good luck for hunting. The Bear Lake Sekani are also said to have had a prophet who performed a "kind of Mass." Further west the Taku developed a movement along similar lines. The prophet would preach and once, while he was doing so, his wife took a knife out of his pocket, as he was not supposed to carry a knife while performing religious rites.

175 177 [648] *Recent history.* Between 1908 and 1910 the Kaska and Tahltan Indians pooled resources with other British Columbia tribes to fight the Registered Trap Line Act of the Province. According to local informants a Kaska spokesman, Ena?inta ("He Watches the People"), declared that the Indians had existed before the white man and could continue to live without his laws. The Indians demanded the right to trap anywhere without interference, but their case was lost. The anthropologist-folklorist, James (locally, "Jimmy") Teit, aided the Indians in this legal move and was secretary of the intertribal organization.[68]

Around 1904 the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly of trade in Lower Post was challenged by John Hyland, who built a store in that settlement which, twenty-two years later, was sold to Oscar Anderson. In the late thirties the establishment was acquired by Bill Strong who already owned a trading company in Telegraph Creek and had formerly traded up the Taku River. He named the establishment Taku Trading Company and continues to operate it through an agent (Pl. 1, a).

In 1913, in a report to the National Museum in Ottawa, Poole Field, a local prospector and trapper and formerly a Hudson's Bay trader in Fort Simpson,[69] commented on the prevalence of tuberculosis among the Cassiar tribes. "Tuberculosis seems to be the strongest of all diseases amongst them. A few years ago they were dieing off fast but it seems to have killed all the sickly ones and left the strongest and healthy ones as they are now on the increase and very little sickness amongst them of any kind."[70]

The year 1920 saw a strike of a different character from those made by miners take place in the Dease River basin. The Indians employed to line boats up that river struck for higher wages. The Hudson's Bay Company at McDame Creek had been paying liners $2.50 a day; they now demanded $5.00 daily. The work was hard and required long hours. Lining began at five o'clock in the morning and often continued until eight at night. Six men were required to pull the boat, while in the craft were a captain and tiller man. The leader of the strike was Big Joe, a Pelly River Indian, and under his leadership the strikers won their demands.

For many years reports of witch hunting emanating from the Kaska area had given those tribes an unfavorable reputation. In 1924 this notoriety was intensified when Fred Allen, a

[68] See Boas, *James A Teit* (1922); Boas, *James A. Teit* (1923). The allegation of Indians that Teit absconded to the United States with the funds of this organization (see below, pp. 153) is patently false and deserves serious refutation.

[69] Cadzow, *Romance of the Alaska Highway* (1944), 87.

[70] Field, Unpublished Manuscript (1913), 22.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

local white trapper, found the body of an Indian, Moccasin, in the Liard River at Little Charlie Slough, thirty miles below Lower Post. The body suggested murder and Allen reported his discovery to the Mounted Police. When they arrived at Lower Post he led them to the scene. The body, however, was missing. Nearby the police found the camp of several siblings of a prominent Nelson River Indian family. The body was finally unearthed and five Indians taken to Prince Rupert, B. C., for trial.[28]

Witch-fear apparently reached the Kaska from the Pacific coast Tlingit via the Tahltan Indians. Informants declared themselves unfamiliar with the techniques of witchcraft and denied that the phenomenon was related to aboriginal sorcery.[29]

In June 1926 a second police patrol was dispatched to Lower Post "to enforce greater respect for the law."[30] This mission was under the command of Inspector T. V. S. Wunsch, assisted by Sergeant J. R. Paton. Accompanying the party was Father E. Allard, O. M. I., en route to take up missionary work with the Kaska Indians. In July of 1926 a mild influenza epidemic attacked the native population at Lower Post as well as the police party. Sergeant Paton reported: "I find that colds and chest trouble are very prevalent in this district, chiefly attributable to their mode of living." Between August 18 and September 1 the police, together with Fred Allen, made a canoe trip to Frances Lake, where, however, they encountered no Indians. The hundred and fifty mile journey upriver took eleven days. The police remained in Lower Post for the winter. In January 1927 Paton got both his hands badly frostbitten while transporting fish from Watson Lake by dog team. One finger had to be amputated at the joint. Later that season, Wunsch suffered an attack of snowblindness.

After his arrival Father Allard opened a church and school at McDame Creek, where he also undertook a brief ethnographic study of the Dease River and Upper Liard Kaska. The priest estimated the total Kaska population to number about 150, including, he thought, "individuals from neighboring nomadic tribes, namely of the Upper Liard, Fort Grahame, Fort Nelson, and also a few from Fort McLeod and Bear Lake, British Columbia."[31] He reported informants to the effect that "the Kaska Indians were very numerous before the coming of the white man which took place about 1878, the time of the first gold rush in the Cassiar." In 1942, while traveling on upper Dease River, Father Allard was drowned near a slough which now bears his name. About that time Father Carpentier, O. M. I., entered the country and built a mission at Dease Lake Post, while the Rev. Pierre A. Pouliet, O. M. I., succeeded Father Allard at McDame Creek.

At this time the Cassiar district was opened to ready access by the outside world through the extension of a northern air route from Edmonton. In 1925 occurred the first air flight to Lower Post.[32] It was ten years more, however, before an air route from Edmonton to Whitehorse, via Lower Post, was surveyed, opening the way for the first weekly mail

[28] British Columbia, *Report of the Superintendent of Provincial Police* (1925), K14; also Canada, *Report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police* (1926), 18–19, 24.

[29] For a historical and psychological study of the dynamics of witchfear among the Kaska see Honigmann, *Witch-Fear in Post-Contact Kaska Society* (1947).

[30] Canada, *Report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police* (1927), 82–84.

[31] Allard, *Notes on the Kaska and Upper Liard Indians* (1928), 24.

[32] Wilkins, *Northwest Passage by Air* (1943), 111–118.

1: Honigmann - E 5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

175 177 flight between those points in 1937. The route was operated by Yukon Southern Airlines, later absorbed by Canadian Pacific Airlines. In 1939 an airport site was surveyed at Watson Lake, about twenty-five miles from Lower Post, and connected to the town by a well worn Indian trail. Funds for the construction of the airport were released in 1940, the year in which mail service to Lower Post was increased to twice weekly. In 1941, when the construction of the airport was begun, mail service was stepped up to three times a week. In 1941 the partially finished airport was turned over to the joint control of Canadian and United States governments. Watson Lake is named for a Yorkshireman, who came to Lower Post about 1897 en route to the Klondike. He remained in the Cassiar to prospect and trap, marrying a Kaska Indian woman by whom he had several children. He died in 1938.

A new wave of activity struck the Cassiar in 1941 when the two North American governments began to enlarge Watson Lake airport for military occupation in connection with the second World War. Vast quantities of supplies and materials were shipped into the country via the Stikine waterway. The portage road from Telegraph Creek to Dease Lake was graveled and widened and a number of sternwheelers (locally called "tunnel boats") and barges were constructed at Dease Lake Post for service on the lake and river. In July 1941 the first barges reached Lower Post with supplies for the airport. A road was built extending from the settlement to Watson Lake.[36] In 1942 construction activity was stepped up with the undertaking of the Alaska Highway (first called the Alcan Highway). Thousands of civilian and uniformed construction workers began to appear in Lower Post for what slight recreation that isolated settlement afforded. In that same year the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned its McDame Creek post, transferring business to Lower Post where, in 1944, a modern store and warehouse were built fronting the new Highway (Pl. 1, c). The Roman Catholic mission also moved to Lower Post and another church was built at Watson Lake to accommodate the Catholic civilian and military personnel quartered on that huge installation. The B. C. Police constable and game warden were shifted from McDame Creek in 1944, and for a time occupied quarters near the Hyland River, twelve miles east of Lower Post, where a large construction camp was located. In 1945 these government services also located in Lower Post.

Our period of participation and observation of Kaska society covered the period from June 1944 to September 1944, when interaction between the Highway workers and Indians was still fairly high, and from June 1945 to December 1945, when this interaction had all but disappeared. Our work also followed after over a century of contact between native and western culture. The nature of this contact must now be briefly examined, since from it developed a large part of present Kaska culture.

ACCULTURATION

177 Three main and several less important agents of acculturation may be recognized for their influence on aboriginal Kaska culture. In the main group we can distinguish the traders, missionaries, and police. Of lesser importance in promoting culture change were the miners, trappers, and soldiers who came into contact with the native population.

[36] These vessels are now stored on the Indian reserve about a half mile below Lower Post. Their lumber, although available to Indians for boat construction and other purposes, is rarely used.